



MAR 1 5 2006

Mary Anderson
President
I.E. Canada
438 University Avenue
Suite 1618, P.O. Box 60
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2K8

Dear Ms. Anderson:

Thank you for your January 26, 2006, letter, in which you clarify the position of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters; Canadian Federation of Independent Business; Canadian Chamber of Commerce; Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters; and, Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers Association relative to the commercial program.

As you are aware, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) undertook broad-based client consultations on the nature of the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program to assess the level of support within the trade community for modifications to the program. The feedback gathered throughout these extensive consultations led to the development of a proposed action plan to move the commercial program forward. The CBSA shared the proposed action plan with the trade community at the October 2005 meeting of the Border Commercial Consultative Committee (BCCC) and solicited further input from member associations.

Since October 2005, CBSA officials have met with your associations and others to discuss the proposed action plan. Additionally, a sub-committee to the BCCC was established and met on February 9, 2006, to collectively review the key components of the proposed plan.


Based on the consultations to date, there seems to be broad consensus that measures should be taken to enhance the Customs Self-Assessment (CSA) program and that the Advance Commercial Information (ACI) initiative, for which the CBSA requires funding, should proceed in the highway and rail environments as soon as possible. There are multiple views to consider in relation to the proposal to expand the FAST program to include importers who have invested in joining the Partners in Protection (PIP) program, using the ACI clearance process rather than the CSA clearance process.

I understand that consultations are ongoing with the sub-committee to the BCCC, in which your organizations are participating, and that our collective goal is to confirm an action plan within the next few months, to move the commercial program forward.

I assure you that the CBSA is committed to the CSA, FAST, ACI and PIP Program initiatives; shares your interest in growing the population of registered commercial drivers; and remains eager to partner with the trade community ensuring the free flow of legitimate, low risk trade while identifying and interdicting threats to the health, safety and security of Canadians.

The active participation of your associations in the CBSA consultative exercises and fora is both critical and appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Alain Jolicoeur
President

Cc: Perrin Beatty, President and CEO, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters
Catherine Swift, President, Canadian Federation of Independent Business
Nancy Hughes Anthony, President and CEO, Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC)
Mark A. Nantais, President, Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association